

CHAPTER 1488

Signs

EDITOR'S NOTE: This chapter, previously a codification of Ordinance 278, passed March 14, 1988, as amended, was repealed and re-enacted in its entirety by Ordinance 298, passed December 29, 1993.

- 1488.01 Purpose
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CROSS REFERENCES

Defacing on private property - see M.C.L.A. Sec. 750.385

Posting without permission - see M.C.L.A. Secs. 752.821 et seq.

Graffiti - see GEN. OFF. [Ch. 634](#)

Signs on the Metropolitan Parkway - see GEN. OFF. [656.03](#)

Destruction and defacing of signs - see GEN. OFF. [660.06](#)

Sign specialty technician's license - see B. & H. [1446.17](#)

Fire lane signs - see F.P. 1610.03(BOCA F-311.3)

1488.01 PURPOSE.

This chapter shall regulate the location, number, type, size and height of all signs and outdoor display structures in all zoning districts, as established in Part Twelve - the Planning and Zoning Code, for the purposes of reducing sign or advertising distractions and thereby reducing traffic hazards and accidents; reducing hazards which could be caused if signs were to be located in, project into or overhang any public right of way or be attached to utility poles; diminishing visual pollution caused by the unlimited number, type and size of signs and thereby increasing the effectiveness of signs; and so protecting the health, safety and welfare of the public.

(Ord. 298. Passed 12-29-93.)

1488.02 DEFINITIONS AND RESTRICTIONS.

As used in this chapter:

(a) "Announcement sign" means a permanent sign which provides information relevant to church services, religious activities or educational activities within a building.

- (1) The maximum size of an announcement sign shall be eighty square feet in display area.
- (2) The maximum height of an announcement sign shall be eight feet.

(b) "Area of a sign" means the entire area within a circle, triangle, parallelogram, or other geometric configuration, enclosing the extreme limits of writing, representation, emblem, or any figure or similar character, together with any frame or other material or color forming an integral part of the display or used to differentiate the sign from the background against which it is placed, excluding the necessary supports or uprights on which the sign is placed.

(c) "Awning sign" means a sign that is made of canvas, plastic or similar material, stretched over a frame and directly attached to a wall of a building. Awning signs shall not project more than sixty inches from the wall or more than twelve inches above the roof line.

(d) "Billboard sign" means a sign which advertises a business, activity or service not conducted on the premises upon which the sign is placed.

- (1) The maximum size of a billboard sign shall be 300 square feet in display area.
- (2) The maximum height of a billboard sign shall be fifty feet.
- (3) A billboard sign shall be permitted on land located within the I-2 General Industrial District when such District abuts an interstate highway.
- (4) A billboard sign shall not be located closer than 1,000 feet to any other billboard sign.

(e) "Business sign" means an accessory sign related to the business, activity or service conducted on the premises upon which the sign is placed.

- (1) A business sign may be a lawn sign, pylon sign or wall sign.

A. "Lawn sign" means a free-standing sign supported by uprights, braces or some object on the ground and which is not attached to a building or structure.

1. The maximum size of a lawn sign shall be 120 square feet in display area for parcels abutting a road under jurisdiction of the State of Michigan Department of Highways and Transportation and shall be 100 square feet in display area for parcels abutting any other road.
2. The maximum height of a lawn sign shall be eight feet.
3. A lawn sign shall not be located closer than fifteen feet to any ingress or egress.

B. "Pylon sign" means a type of pole sign.

1. The maximum size of a pylon sign shall be 100 square feet in display area for parcels abutting a road under jurisdiction of the State of Michigan Department of Highways and Transportation and shall be eighty square feet in display area for parcels abutting any other road.
2. The maximum height of a pylon sign shall be eighteen feet for parcels abutting a road under jurisdiction of the State of Michigan Department of Highways and Transportation and shall be fifteen feet for parcels abutting any other road.
3. A pylon sign shall have minimum clearance of six feet from the bottom of the face of the sign to grade level.
4. A pylon sign shall be located not closer than fifty feet to a residentially zoned district.
5. A pylon sign shall be located not closer than fifteen feet to any ingress or egress.

C. "Wall sign" means a sign fastened to or painted on the wall area of a building, structure or canopy with the exposed face of the sign in a plane approximately parallel to the plane of the wall.

1. The maximum size allowed for a wall sign, awning sign or combination of the two, shall be determined by multiplying the linear width of the legally occupied tenant space or the building wall on which the sign is to be placed by two square feet, but shall not exceed 200 square feet in any case. An additional wall sign, utilizing the above computations, shall be allowed for any business occupying a unit with the exterior building walls fronting two major or secondary thoroughfares.
2. A wall sign shall not extend more than twelve inches beyond the surface of the building or structure wall on which it is placed.
3. A wall sign shall not extend more than twelve inches above the highest point used to measure the height of the building or twelve inches above the roofline at the point where the sign is attached, whichever is less.

(2) Any freestanding business which occupies its own separate parcel of land within the B-1, B-2, B-3 or B-4 Districts shall be permitted one wall sign and either one pylon sign or one lawn sign. An additional wall sign, and an additional pylon sign or lawn sign, shall be permitted if the parcel has 250 linear feet or greater of frontage on two major or secondary thoroughfares. For those parcels with frontage on only one major or secondary thoroughfare, an additional pylon sign or lawn sign shall be permitted if the parcel has a linear street frontage of 300 feet or more.

(3) Any parcel of land occupied by two or more businesses in the B-1, B-2, B-3 or B-4 Districts shall be regulated as follows:

- A. One lawn sign or one pylon sign advertising the entire development shall be permitted.
- B. One additional lawn sign or one additional pylon sign advertising the entire development shall be permitted when such development abuts two major or secondary thoroughfares.
- C. Each business within the development shall be permitted one wall sign.
- D. One additional wall sign shall be permitted for a business occupying a unit with exterior building walls fronting two major or secondary thoroughfares.

(4) Each business occupying 40,000 square feet or more within a development shall be permitted one pylon sign or one lawn sign.

(5) In the OS-1 and OS-2 Districts, one lawn sign and one wall sign not exceeding forty square feet per development is permitted.

(6) Any parcel of land occupied by two or more businesses in the I-1, I-2 or TR Districts shall be regulated as follows:

- A. One lawn sign identifying the entire development shall be permitted.
- B. One additional lawn sign identifying the entire development shall be permitted such development abuts two major or secondary thoroughfares.
- C. Each business within the development having separate and direct access to the exterior of the building and not from an entrance in common with other businesses, shall be permitted one wall sign.

(f) "Directional sign" means a sign providing direction within any one development. Directional signs, when established by the Township or the Government of the United States of America, as may be required for the purpose of directing or orienting, are not limited in number or size.

(g) "Festoon sign" means a sign consisting of incandescent light bulbs, banners, pennants or other such features.

(h) "Flashing/moving sign" means a sign which intermittently reflects light either from an artificial source or from the sun, has movement or illumination, such as intermittent flashing, scintillating or varying intensity, or has any visible portion in intermittent or constant motion, either from artificial or natural sources. "Changeable copy" as defined in this chapter is not considered a flashing/moving sign.

(i) "Identification sign" means a sign that displays the name and/or address of a person or firm.

(1) The maximum size of an identification sign shall not exceed four square feet in display area.

(2) The maximum height of an identification sign shall not exceed eight feet.

(j) "Political sign" means a sign relating to the election of a person to public office, relating to a political party or relating to a matter to be voted upon at an election called by a public body.

(1) The maximum size of a political sign shall be thirty-two square feet of display area on any nonresidentially zoned parcel, and sixteen square feet in any residentially zoned parcel, including single-family or multiple-family Residential Districts. Candidates for political office are limited to one sign per parcel, regardless of the zoning district.

(2) A candidate or the person desirous of placing political signs shall register his or her intent with the Township Clerk, prior to the erection of any political sign, by completing a form prescribed by the Township Clerk which shall include the name, address and telephone number of the candidate or other person responsible for the placement of political signs, a description of the political signs in adequate detail so that they may reasonably be identified and an attestation that the candidate or person placing political signs has received permission from all owners of property where political signs will be placed.

(3) Political signs shall not be erected or placed upon property prior to thirty calendar days before an election and shall be removed within ten calendar days after the election for which they are erected or placed. The candidate or other person requesting placement of the sign, and any property owner who has an interest in the subject property where signs are placed, are separately liable for compliance.

(4) Political signs shall not be located in, project into or overhang any public right of way or be attached to any utility pole.

(5) Political signs shall be constructed of durable materials and erected in a manner so as to avoid collapse from inadvertent contact or wind or other weather conditions. Construction materials and erection shall occur so that no dangerous surfaces result, including, but not limited to, protruding nails or sharp edges.

(6) Political signs shall be placed so as to avoid obstructing the view of vehicular and pedestrian traffic areas and shall be located not less than twenty-five feet, measured perpendicular, from any public right of way, private street, driveway, parking lot or sidewalk.

(k) "Portable sign" means a sign which is not fastened to a building or structure or permanently to the ground.

(l) "Real estate development sign" means a freestanding grade-level sign informing when a subdivision or other real estate development will commence construction or when it will be available for sale, use or occupancy.

(1) A real estate development sign may be located on or off the premises proposed for development.

A. A permit for a real estate development sign, valid for twelve months, shall be secured from the Clinton Township Building Department.

B. Additional permits for a real estate development sign may be granted provided the development is active.

(2) A real estate development sign shall inform the public of developments located in and approved by the Township.

(3) A real estate development sign shall not be located in, project into or overhang any public right of way, driveway, sidewalk or bicycle path.

(4) A real estate development shall be limited to one on-site sign and two off-site signs.

(5) A real estate development sign shall be located only on property abutting a major or secondary thoroughfare having a right-of-way width of at least eighty-six feet.

(6) The location of a real estate development sign shall not impede vehicular or pedestrian traffic.

(7) A real estate development sign shall not be fastened to a tree, utility pole, building or other structure and shall be securely fastened to the ground.

(8) The maximum size of a real estate development sign shall be eighty square feet in display area.

(9) The maximum height of a real estate development sign shall be fifteen feet.

(10) Upon submittal of an application for a permit for each real estate development sign, a cash deposit in the amount of five hundred dollars (\$500.00) shall be made with the Township Treasurer.

(11) Failure to comply with any and all of the above regulations or failure to completely remove the real estate development sign after the permit has expired shall result in forfeiture of the cash deposit.

(m) "Real estate sign" means a sign which advertises the particular property upon which it is placed for sale, rent or lease.

(n) "Sign" means the display of words, numerals, figures, devices, designs or trademarks to make known an individual, firm, profession, business, product or message and which is visible to the general public.

(o) "Special event sign" means a sign which advertises a grand opening, special event or similar message.

- (1) A permit for a special event sign shall be secured from the Building Department.
 - A. A permit for a special event sign shall be issued not more than two times within any twelve-month period.
 - B. A permit for a special event sign shall be issued for a period not to exceed seven consecutive days.
- (2) A special event sign shall be located only on the premises of the property upon which the special event is conducted. In a circumstance where more than one parcel of land is involved, only one special event sign shall be permitted.
- (3) A special event sign shall be located so as not to project into or overhang any public right of way, driveway or sidewalk.
- (4) The location of a special event sign shall not impede on-site or off-site vehicular or pedestrian traffic.
- (5) A special event sign shall not be permanently fastened to a building or structure and shall be securely fastened to the ground.
- (6) The maximum size of a special event sign shall be thirty-two square feet in display area.
- (7) The maximum height of a special event sign shall be eight feet.
- (8) Upon submittal of an application for a special event sign, a cash deposit in the amount of two hundred dollars (\$200.00) shall be made with the Township Treasurer.
- (9) A special event sign shall be removed from the premises conducting the special event not later than twenty-four hours after expiration of the sign permit.
- (10) Failure to comply with any and all of the above regulations or failure to completely remove the special event sign within twenty-four hours after the permit has expired shall result in forfeiture of one hundred dollars (\$100.00) of the cash deposit.
- (11) Applicants who receive a permit for a special event sign thereby give the unconditional right to the Township, as a condition for the privilege of receiving the permit, to remove any special event sign or any portion or part thereof which remains on the premises for more than twenty-four hours after the permit has expired.

Removal of a special event sign or any portion or part thereof by the Township more than twenty-four hours after the permit has expired shall result in forfeiture of the two hundred dollar (\$200.00) cash deposit.

(p) "Entranceway sign" means a sign depicting the entranceway of a residential, office/service, commercial or industrial development or subdivision, church, college or university, which sign is located at the entrance of the development or subdivision.

- (1) The maximum size of an entranceway sign shall be seventy-five square feet in display area.
- (2) The maximum height of an entranceway sign shall be five feet.
- (3) An entranceway sign shall not be located within the triangular area formed by the intersection of any two public right-of-way lines and the line between such public right-of-way lines at points twenty-five feet distant from the point of their intersection.
- (4) A subdivision entranceway sign located within a public right of way shall comply with regulations established by the Macomb County Road Commission, the Michigan Department of Highways and Transportation or the United States Department of Transportation.

(q) "Vehicle business sign" means a vehicle upon which a sign is painted or attached and which is parked upon the premises for the intent of advertising.

(r) "Window sign" means lightweight sign constructed of material such as cardboard, cloth, paper, plastic, metal or wood.

(1) Window signs shall be limited in area to fifty percent of the total surface of the window.

(2) Window signs shall be located and contained wholly within a building so as to be visible from outside the building.

(s) "Changeable copy" means a portion of a business sign, not exceeding twenty square feet, has characters, letters or illustrations that can be changed or rearranged either manually or electronically.

(1) Changeable copy signs shall contain messages consisting only of letters, numerals and other such characters and shall not contain animation, movement or the appearance of movement.

(2) The frequency of message change shall not be less than 1.5 seconds. Scrolling, flashing, blinking or other visual effects are prohibited.

(3) The luminosity or brightness of the copy shall be within reason and, further, shall not be adjusted to the most intense setting available and shall be reduced at dusk.

(4) Signs with changeable copy shall not be located closer than 300 feet to residentially-zoned property.

(5) If it is determined that the operation of the changeable copy sign constitutes a hazard, distraction or nuisance to motorists or to neighboring property owners, the Township will advise the owner of the sign with written notice.

(Ord. 298. Passed 12-29-93; Ord. 298-A-1. Passed 10-3-94; Ord. Unno. Passed 9-29-97; Ord. Unno. Passed 8-27-01; Ord. Unno. Passed 12-16-02; Ord. Unno. Passed 11-21-05.)

1488.03 SCHEDULE OF REGULATIONS.

The following chart specifies those districts in which the designated signs are permitted. All conditions previously cited in this chapter are applicable:

1488.04 PERMIT REQUIRED; EXTERNAL ILLUMINATION; LOCATION; REMOVAL BY TOWNSHIP.

(a) All signs, except non-electric directional, identification, real estate and window signs, shall require a permit issued by the Clinton Township Building Department.

(b) External illumination of signs shall be directed so as not to cause visual interference to persons driving on adjacent thoroughfares or to adjacent property occupants.

(c) Signs shall not be located in, project into or overhang any public right of way or which are be attached to any utility pole.

(d) Signs which are located in, project into or overhang a public easement or a public right of way or which are attached to a utility pole in violation of this section shall be removed by the Township without notice.

(1) Before any sign which has been removed by the Township is returned to the owner, a fee in the amount of fifty dollars (\$50.00) shall be paid to the Township Treasurer for removal and storage of the sign.

(2) Any sign which has been removed by the Township shall be deemed abandoned and shall be disposed of if the owner does not claim the sign within thirty days from the date of removal.

(e) Streamers, wind-blown devices, spinners, pennants and balloons are hereby prohibited.

(Ord. 298. Passed 12-29-93.)

1488.045 PRE-EXISTING SIGNS.

Any pre-existing signs which are not in compliance with the provisions of this chapter and have not received a variance shall not:

(a) Be changed to another type of sign which is not in compliance with this chapter;

(b) Be structurally altered so as to prolong the life of the sign or so as to change the shape, size, type or design of the sign;

(c) Have its face or faces changed by more than thirty-three percent (one time only) unless the sign is brought into compliance with the requirements of this chapter;

(d) Be re-established after damage or destruction if the estimated expense of reconstruction exceeds fifty percent of the appraised replacement cost as determined by the Department of Building; or

(e) Be re-established after the activity, business or usage to which it relates has been discontinued for a period of ninety days or longer.

(Ord. Unno. Passed 9-29-97.)

1488.05 VARIANCES.

(a) Any person who has been refused a sign permit by the Township of Clinton because the proposed sign does not meet the provisions of this chapter may request a variance from such provisions from the Clinton Township Board of Appeals.

(b) A variance from the provisions of this chapter shall only be granted if the Sign Appeals Board finds that each of the following is true:

(1) The particular physical surroundings shape or topographical conditions of the property would render compliance with the provisions of this chapter difficult and would likely result in a particular hardship on the owner, as distinguished from inconvenience to the owner or a desire to increase financial gain or avoid the financial expense of compliance.

(2) Strict enforcement of the provisions of this chapter would serve no useful purpose.

(3) The type of sign structure and the location proposed would not pose a significant risk to the public health, safety and welfare.

(4) The benefit to the general public and/or to the applicant under the circumstances outweighs any risk to traffic safety and the Township's desire to eliminate the accumulation of visual clutter in accordance with the stated purpose of this chapter.

(Ord. Unno. Passed 9-29-97.)

1488.06 VIOLATIONS; NOTICE.

Any person, firm or corporation, public or private, or anyone acting on behalf thereof, who has any ownership interest in any sign placed contrary to the provisions of this chapter, or who places or contributes to the placement of any sign contrary to the provisions of this chapter, or who owns property upon which a sign has been illegally placed, shall be deemed to be in violation of this chapter. Where a property owner does not own the sign and has not placed or contributed to the placement of the sign contrary to the provisions of this chapter, said property owner shall, prior to the commencement of any prosecution against him or her, be provided with written notice and a period of thirty days within which to remove any illegal sign.

(Ord. 298-A-1. Passed 10-3-94.)

1488.99 PENALTY.

(EDITOR'S NOTE: See Section [202.99](#) for general Code penalty if no specific penalty is provided.)

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